



## ***Glacier National Park Proposes New Advance Reservation System for Wilderness Camping Permits***

Glacier National Park is proposing to transition to the Recreation.gov online reservation system for advance wilderness camping permits. Glacier is a popular wilderness backpacking destination with a high demand for campsites. Over the last few years, applications for advance wilderness camping permits have tripled. Previously, park staff conducted a lengthy manual lottery to issue advance reservation permits using Pay.gov. Transitioning to Recreation.gov for advance reservations would replace the labor-intensive lottery with a more efficient, user directed online service.

The new online reservation system will only accommodate groups of 1-4 campers per permit. (Previously, successful applicants could obtain single permits for groups of 1-8 and 9-12.) To make advance reservations for groups larger than 4 on Recreation.gov, backpackers would need to be aware of the following permitting requirements:

- Groups of 5-8 campers would require 2 separate permits and 2 separate group leaders.
- Groups of 9-12 campers would require 3 separate permits and 3 separate group leaders.

To provide an alternative way of obtaining a permit for groups larger than 4, the park would retain the use of the Pay.gov site during a one-day application period (24 hours) for mid-size and large group permits. The application period for permits via Pay.gov would occur before advance reservations are available on Recreation.gov (see Important Dates, below). Therefore, visitors planning wilderness camping trips for groups larger than 4 could first apply for permits using the one-day Pay.gov opportunity, followed by the Recreation.gov site if unsuccessful at Pay.gov.

### **Important Dates**

**February 15:** The Recreation.gov site would be live for preview only (not yet for reservations). Glacier National Park's [Wilderness Camping Advance Reservations](#) webpage would also be available for visitors to familiarize themselves with important details about obtaining an advance wilderness camping reservation.

**March 1:** One-day (24 hours) application period on Pay.gov as an alternative way to obtain permits for groups larger than 4. The Pay.gov site would open at 12:01 am MST and close at 11:59 pm. Group applications

submitted to Pay.gov would be placed into a lottery and reservations for successful applicants would be booked on Recreation.gov by park staff. Camping reservations would be awarded to 30 groups of 5-8 campers and 5 groups of 9-12 campers. Successful applicants would be notified via email from Recreation.gov.

**March 3 – 7:** Visitors who submitted applications on March 1 to Pay.gov for groups larger than 4 would be notified if they were successful or unsuccessful. Once notified, successful applicants would have five days from receiving notification to make payment to Recreation.gov or the reservation would be cancelled.

**March 15 – September 30:** Wilderness camping reservations would be available on Recreation.gov beginning at 8:00 am MDT on March 15. A Recreation.gov account would be necessary to make reservations. Visitors may visit the Recreation.gov website to create an account.

### **Fees**

Each wilderness camping permit would cost \$10.00, payable on Recreation.gov. In addition, there would be a \$7.00 per person per night camping fee, also payable on Recreation.gov. Applications submitted to Pay.gov on March 1 for mid-size and large group permits through the lottery would also incur a non-refundable \$10.00 application fee, payable on Pay.gov. These fees represent a slight change from the current fee structure but would result in lower costs for advance reservation applicants. While the \$10.00 permit fee to Recreation.gov would be a new charge, a \$30.00 advance reservation fee previously

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charged for all advance reservations via Pay.gov would no longer be in effect.

The \$10.00 permit fee would be shared between the park and Recreation.gov. The park would retain the \$7.00 per person per night camping fee and would also receive the \$10.00 application fee for the March 1 group lotteries (payable on Pay.gov). All revenues collected by the park would be strictly used to cover the costs of managing the permit system.

### **Walk-up Permits**

As previously, seventy percent of wilderness campsites open for camping between June 15 and September 30 would be available for advance reservations (now on Recreation.gov), leaving thirty percent available for walk-up permits the day before or the day of the trip starting date. Advance reservation campsites that are not booked would still be made available for walk-up permits. Wilderness camping permits for October and the winter would still be available on a walk-up basis only. The park would continue to staff wilderness permit offices and ranger stations for walk-up permitting. Visitors with advance reservations booked on Recreation.gov would still need to visit one of the park's permit issuing stations to pick up the permit; permit stations are listed on the park's Wilderness Permits webpage, at [Wilderness Camping](#).

### **Campground Opening Dates and Availability**

Park wilderness campgrounds would open on the same dates as previously; opening dates for each campground are listed on the park's [Wilderness Camping Map](#). The group lottery system via Pay.gov on March 1 and the Recreation.gov system would accept applications for permits for all park wilderness campgrounds that are open from June 15 to September 30. As in prior years, advance reservations would not be available for October or the winter; permits for camping in October and the winter would be available on a walk-up basis.

Because of the high demand for campsites, backpackers would be encouraged to discuss plans with members of their party before booking a reservation and be prepared with three or four different trip itineraries in the event preferred campsites are not available.

Visitors with wilderness camping permits would not be required to also obtain a reservation for vehicle entry.

### **Summary of Changes**

- Advance wilderness camping reservations would be booked via Recreation.gov.
- Applicants would book their own advance reservations (instead of park staff booking reservations for applicants)
- \$10.00 permit fee payable on Recreation.gov
- The \$7.00 per person per night camping fee would be payable on Recreation.gov (upon booking the reservation) instead of at park permit offices.
- Each permit would only accommodate groups of 1-4 campers.
  - ◊ Groups of 5-8 campers would require 2 separate permits and 2 separate group leaders.
  - ◊ Groups of 9-12 campers would require 3 separate permits and 3 separate group leaders.
- There would be a one-day (24 hour) application period (on March 1, via Pay.gov) as an alternative way of obtaining a permit for groups larger than 4.
- The \$30.00 advance reservation fee previously charged for manual lotteries for successful advance group reservations via Pay.gov would no longer be in effect.

The public is invited to comment on the proposed changes to Glacier's wilderness camping advance permit reservation system.

**Please post comments online at:**

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/WildernessCampingPermits>

**Or send comments to:**

Superintendent, Glacier National Park  
Attn: Wilderness Camping Permits  
PO Box 1  
West Glacier, MT 59936

**PLEASE POST COMMENTS BY  
FEBRUARY 17, 2023**